

PLAIN and EASIE
METHOD;

S H E W I N G

How the Office of OVERSEER of
the POOR may be managed, where-
by it may be 2000 *l. per Annum* Advan-
tage to the County of DEVON,
without abating the Weekly Relief
of any Poor, or doing a Penny damage
to any Person.

By RICHARD DUNNING, Gent.

— *Venienti occurrere morbo.*

*Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,
Quàm quod ridiculos homines facit.* Juven. Sat.

L O N D O N,

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Additions, Nov: 1. 1686. R. P.**

To the Right Worshipful, and my Honored Masters, the Justices of the Peace for the County of
D E V O N.

AS Justice is the common preserver of Human Society, of Order, Peace, and Commerce, consisting of those two general parts, Preventing and Punishing; so the first is the chief and more noble part thereof: That not only nips Vice in its Bud and Blossom, but so refines its Natural Soil, that its very Source becomes to be obstructed, and its Progress prevented; neither are the mischiefs few or inconsiderable, where this first branch hath not its due and wished effects. Those who are not employed in duly discharging what properly belongs to their Places and callings, soon becoming dissolute, following the wild mazes of their Wills and Passions; hence arise swarms of Mutineers and Levellers, the loud noise for Liberty and Property, tho the invading that of others is only aimed at.

The Prefaces of several Laws observe it as too common, That they who lay aside their Lawful Trades and Employments, do thereupon betake themselves to the taking, killing, and stealing of Game, appropriated to the King, Noblemen, Gentlemen, &c. And common Experience shews that such takers seldom confine themselves to the breach of Laws for preserving Game, but having gone over those bounds and limits, beyond which they may not in-

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nocently pass, are in a short time dextrous in other Pilfrings. And did not the diligence of Magistrates, and their often punishing such loose Persons, prevent them from acting bare-faced, they would soon in no less measure than the Goths and Vandals of Old, and the Wastcoteers of late, be a terror to all People.

It has been an aspersion unjustly cast on the Statutes of the 43 Eliz. for Relief of Poor, That the Law hath made multitudes idle and careless: And that allowing them a Refuge for Relief from their Parishes, hath caused them the less to provide for themselves. Indeed, by that Law the Parish is (as they commonly say) bound to find them, but that in a far other and larger sense than they mean, viz. Work for those that WILL Labour, Punishment for those that WILL NOT, and Bread for those that cannot. And if the two first parts of that Law were duly observed, the Poor would not only be reduced to a small number, comparatively to what they now are, but there would be no such Poor as idle and wandring Rogues and Vagabonds, as the Statue of the 29th. of the same Queen shews there were before that time: And the Punishment appointed for such loose Persons being, that they be Whipt, and sent to the place of their Birth, as an Admonition to the Inhabitants of that place, to bring up their Children better.

Those who have observed the Method that the Ancient Laws direct for Pursuing and Apprehending Felons and other Capital Offenders, by Hue and Cries, have lookt on it as almost impossible (were such ways duly pursued)
for

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for such to escape, the reach of Justice. But they that have deliberately considered of the Laws of a later date, especially the 4th. 39th. 43d. of the late Queen, and the 4th. and 7th. of King James; and of the Methods they direct for the early placing out the Children of the Poor, Apprentices; and those of riper Years in Service; That none be entertained in Service without due Testimonials whence they came; nor then by the pound, piece, or pair, in which Masterless Method many serve more Masters in a Week than they spend sober Nights, but for no less time than a Year: That Persons of all Ages and Sexes be duly employed, and of all Qualities, be neither Idle nor disorderly: The Annual choice of Officers in every Parish to see those things, and others of the like Nature, duly observed; and withall, the Penalties on them that remain remiss or negligent. To which may be added the late Laws of Excise, which as they are Advantageous in producing a vast Revenue to the Crown, so are more Advantageous to the Country in affording a constant and Genteel Livelihood to multitudes of decayed Tradesmen, Gentlemen, &c. (to which every one contributes as little as he pleaseth, no one being Obligated to keep or frequent Ale-houses) may well admire that there is any longer a Felon in the Gaol, or an Idler in the Streets. And that there may not be such, there can scarce be better ways contrived than the Laws direct; nor any in a greater measure enabled to effect it than the Justices of the Peace are. To you through His Majesties favour belongs the choice of nominating, placing, displacing, directing,
and

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and encouraging almost all subordinate, and inferior Officers; and of Examining, Inspecting, and Punishing their omissions and neglects; and now, if ever, its time to restrain the increase of the Poor, by restraining the Idleness and Insolence of the meaner sort. That the Method hereby proposed is both practicable and easie, is manifest, and the Legality of it is fully attested, by being Examined and Approved of by a considerable number of eminent Justices of the Peace of this County; being no new thing, but a more literal and direct observance of the Law than the common practice is.

And tho it cannot be certainly asserted what Annual Advantage such Method in a whole County may produce, yet as far as can well be computed, and as may upon good grounds be presumed, the Yearly Profit to the Publick would far exceed what this Paper mentions.

If the Children in the City of Norwich between the Ages of Six and Ten Years, gain 12000 l. per Annum

** Author of the State of England Dr. Chamberlain.*

*beyond their Maintenance, as an * Author of good Credit affirms to have appeared upon a late Computation there made, how much greater Sum might be advanced in so many Populous Towns, and in so large a County as this is, by the Labors of such and others of riper Years, who now spend most of their time idly, or worse? Besides many other Advantages would thence arise some whereof are obvious to the meanest Capacity: And when ever an Act of this Nature shall be thought worth the vigorous prosecution, a sufficiency of fit subservient Agents will never be wanting.*

A plain and easie Method, &c.

ALthough I have no particular knowledge of the several Parishes in this County; yet as 'tis true, that the Charge to the Poor in many Parishes doth exceed *W.* in a proportionable rate; and that every Parish is, or may be equally burthened with *W.* So 'tis as true, that the general increase of such Charge (which is near double what it was Thirty Years since, and like to double again in a shorter time) is not occasioned by any Dearth or Scarcity of Necessaries, there being never a *greater* Plenty; Nor for want of Employments, there being never *more*; nor through the smallness of Wages, that being never so *great*: But by *Idleness*, profuse Expences, the *ill* bringing up of Children, and the younger sort. Now, how all those inconveniences may with ease, and without the help of any *new* Law, or breach of an *old*, be so far remedied, as to be of 5000 *l. per Annum* clear Advantage to this County, I shall briefly demonstrate.

First, That 40 *l. per Annum* in the Parish of *W.* is somewhat more than 1000 *l.* in the *Subdivision*; and 1000 *l. per Annum* in the *Subdivision* is somewhat more than 9000 *l. per Annum* in the *County*. (The disproportion between the South and the other two grand *Divisions*

Divisions being considered) consequently that which may be done elsewhere as well as in *Winckley*, as what is hereby proposed may, and is 40 *l. per Annum* clear Advantage to the Parish of *W.* may, and will be 9000 *l. per Annum* and upwards Advantage to this County. This being granted, nothing more remains than to shew how an Overseer of the Poor of *W.* hath, and still may benefit that Parish, not only 40 *l. per Annum*, but a far greater Sum beyond what hath been done by any other.

Each private Person being considered as a Member of the *Publick*, nothing is more *plain* than this; That he that spends an hour *idly* or in *Begging*, Cheating, or Stealing, either in that time gets nothing at all, or nothing to the *Publick*, some one or other receiving damage equal to his gains: Whereas he that spends that short time in a Lawful Labour, and thereby earns a Penny, earns that small sum without any damage to any Person, (*Sic parvis componere magna.*) And therefore lay this as a Foundation, That whatsoever is *Lawfully* earned by the procurement of an Overseer of the Poor by such Persons, and in such time, who would otherwise spend the same time in idleness, unprofitable or ill Employments, is *cleer gain*, no one receiving any *damage* thereby.

This being granted, the bringing common Beggars to Work, as also common Bayliffs and Apparators, who perchance serve a Process or two in a Month, and live idly the rest of the time; The keepers of small

small Tipling-houses, and such like loose Persons, they being with their whole Retinue brought constantly to Labor in an honest Employment, the product of their Labor is clear *gain*.

It has been almost a Proverbial saying, That 'tis a great trouble to bring *Beggars to Stocks*, but to bring *Beggars, &c. to Work*, to leave a habit of Idleness, and the Advantages of Stealing being the perquisites of their Trade; to bring them, and such as are before mentioned, constantly to Labor, some will say, here's a Task indeed, *hic labor, hoc opus est*. But when the slenderness of their Power to resist such or the like easie Method for reforming them as is herein set down (which may receive the better encouragement tending to their own and the Publick good) and the plainness of those Laws which require it, and the easiness of putting them in Execution are seriously considered; 'twill soon appear that their not demeaning themselves as useful Members of the Commonwealth, rather ariseth from the neglect of those that should *regulate* them, than from any Power in themselves to avoid being *regulated* by such or the like Method as is herein mentioned, according to the Act of Parliament in that case made and provided, whereby the Church-wardens and Overseers of the Poor are positively required by raising a convenient Stock or otherwise, to Employ and set on Work all such Poor of their Parishes, married or unmarried, as have no Estates to maintain them, and use no ordinary and

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daily Trade of Life to get their Living by. So that such as have no Estates sufficient to maintain them, and such as have no Trade in which they are ordinarily and daily Employed, are by the *plain* words of the Law to be *employed* and *set on work* by the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor, who are to meet once in every Month at least, to consider of fit ways for setting and keeping such Poor on Work, upon pain of forfeiting 20 s. apiece for each Month they neglect so to do. And such Poor as shall refuse to Work according to such appointment, are by the same Law to be sent to the House of Correction.

But the Law that says they shall set their Poor on Work, cannot be understood otherwise, than that such Officers shall set them on Work, in such Employments, in such manner, and by such ways and means as may best suit with the Capacities of Persons employing, and to be employed, and the occasions and circumstances of time and place; supposing that the setting down a Method is no adding unto, or a digressing from the Law, but rather a submissive compliance therewith. But before I mention such Method as I presume to propose, I shall in pursuance of what I before said, *viz.* that 40 *l. per Annum*, or rather a far greater sum hath, and still may by such Method be gotten in *W.* and proportionably be of Advantage to this County beyond 9000 *l. per Annum*, if the same or like means were used. For Instance,

G. B. a common Begger in adjacent and remote Parishes, complaining of extraordinary swellings in one of his Legs (which with Plaisters, Binders, &c. seemed near as great as his Waste) pretending to have a sick Wife and young Children (all false) made Begging his ordinary and daily Trade; and having for near Twenty Years so complained, was generally believed therein. But the Method herein to be proposed for *bringing idle and counterfeited Beggers, and other idle Persons to work*, brought him in a few days time to throw off his burthen of Clouts from his feigned griefs, and to follow his work day by day; so that by his Threshal, Mattock, and the like, he now gains his Meat and Drink, and 5 *d.* per Day; and in likelihood hath forgotten which was the lame Leg. 5 *d.* per Day is 2 *s.* 6 *d.* per Week, in one Year, abating two Weeks for Holy-days, comes to ————— 6 *l.* — 5 *s.* — 0 *d.*

His Diet being part of his Wages, cannot be less than 5 *d.* a day more, and in the like time comes to — 6 *l.* 5 *s.* 0 *d.*

His Wife a lusty Woman, and formerly a common Vagabond, can well by her labor earn her Diet, which may be valued at 18 *d.* a Week, and 6 *d.* a Week Wages, and will scorn to work at that rate; yet so, comes to *per Annum* ————— 5 *l.* — 0 *s.* — 0 *d.*

L. B. another common Begger, would sometimes be on his Range without once returning home in a quarter of a Year, and at last return as lousie, penniless, and ragged as he went out; now constantly

keeps his *Church*, having formerly no Cloaths to come *there*, earns his Meat and Drink, which cannot be valued less than 2s. 6d. in a Week, consequently in a Year, abating as before, comes to——6 l.---5 s.---0 d.

He likewise receives 2 s. *per week* Wages in the Summer, and 1 s. 6 d. *per week* Wages in the Winter, and hath his constant work at one place, which Yearly comes to——4 l.---7 s.---6 d.

His Wife, a lusty Woman, and formerly a common Vagabond, can well earn her Diet, and 6 d. *per week*, and I conceive would scarce accept of 12 d. *per week* and Diet, if offered; yet at 6 d. *per week* and Diet comes Yearly to, as before——5 l.---0 s.---0 d.

W. P. a strong Person, but of weak Capacity, having a lusty Woman, and a common Vagrant to his Wife, who could by her begging Trade gain his and her own Diet, and the Parish provided him Cloaths; yet in a short time after, he had Necessaries in order, could well earn his Diet, and 2 s. *per week* Wages; his Diet *per Annum* valued at——6 l.---5 s.---0 d.

And his Wages at 2 s. *per week*, comes to *per Annum*——5 l.---0 s.---0 d.

His Wife can well earn as each of the other two *per Annum*, as before——5 l.---0 s.---0 d.

I have hinted at only but a small part of this one sort of Idlers that the Parish of *W.* could lately afford, there being many others, some that can get Wages beyond their Diet; others that can earn their Diet, which singly in a years time is considerable; some

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continue reformed, and *all* would with a little care; and I cannot believe but that any that can walk some Miles to beg, can earn their Bread at home; but forbear particularizing them, the labor of those already mentioned, and who formerly spent their time idly, or unprofitably as to the *Publick*; amounting yearly to more than I before pretend to demonstrate: Besides these a greater number were reform'd, who were no Beggars, yet more disorderly, and I know not where there are two Parishes together, in one of which may not be found of idle and loose Persons a number answerable to 6 in *W.* or rather more.

And now having by an usual and demonstrative way set down the experienced effects of our Method, I shall next mention the cause or manner thereof.

First, *How to find and provide Employments for all sorts.*

Secondly, *How to compel both Men and Women constantly to follow their Employments, who receive Relief of the Parish, and can wander abroad; for such can labor at home.*

Thirdly, *How to compel the Poor of each Sex, who receive no such Relief, constantly to follow their Labor.*

First, For providing Work for men in Husbandry, this was our Method; we gave them *Lists* (taken out of a Book, wherein all our *Lists* of this sort were entered, subscribed by the *Officers*, and allowed by two *Justices* of the Peace) in this manner.

You *A. B.* when not otherwise constantly Employed, are to work for *C. D.* four days, *E. F.* three days, &c. the Payers to the Poor successively as herein named, to receive for your Work your Diet, and 3 *d.* per Day in the Summer, and 2 *d.* per Day in the Winter, and to give each Person three days notice before you apply to them for their work, and to give us an account of your due observance hereof at---on S. seven-night next, between the hours of----and to give the like account, at the same place on every S. seven-night for three Months then next following, between the hours of----

Note, That such as receive Relief from the Parish, were to give such account as above, before they received their Pay.

And for Employing Women, this was our Method: We agreed with one Person, who usually Employed several *Spinsters*; the substance of which Agreement was, That he was to employ in *Spinning, Carding, &c.* all such Women as by direction of the Overseers should apply to him for Work, to pay them such Wages as they should deserve, and accordingly Order them where to go for Work: And in case any of them should detain or imbezzle any Wool to them delivered, the Owner to prove the delivery thereof before two Justices of the Peace, and thereupon the Overseers to pay him the value thereof; and they in recompence thereof, to receive such satisfaction from the *Imbezler* as the Justices shall order.

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By this means both sorts had sufficient Employments provided for them: And such as afterwards should refuse to Work, came directly within the reach of that Law, that such shall be sent to the *Bridewell*.

Note, *The like may be done for Employing of Combers and Weavers, where such are,*

Secondly, *How to compel such as receive Relief of the Parish, to follow their Labor, &c.*

They having fit *Employments* provided for them in manner before mentioned as they ought, so they can easily make out that they have constantly and diligently been *Employed* therein, or in some other Lawful *Employments* (if they have been so *Employed*) either by procuring their *Employers*, or some of their Families to come at the *Pay-Board*, or elsewhere, to certify how they have been *Employed*, and what they have done since last *Pay-Day*: Or else they may bring a *Certificate* thereof in Writing from those who *Employ* them; and until they give a good account of their diligence, and in such manner attest the same, to receive no *Relief*.

Thirdly, *How to compel such Poor as receive no Relief from the Parish, to follow their Labor.*

Both Men and Women had *Employments* provided for them in manner before mentioned: But their Necessities not bringing them to the *Pay-board*, used these several ways.

First, Knowing that those who received *Relief*, would account it no small Punishment to be at once deprived.

deprived of their pleasant old Trade of *walking* and *begging*, and be compelled daily to *Labor*. And likewise in manner aforesaid to prove the same, would be apt to envy their old Companions and other *Idlers*. And therefore to make them the forwarder in complaining, promised them a Reward of 1 s. for each Person they should discover and complain of for *Begging*, and the like Reward for discovering and complaining of any of the lustier or stronger sort of *Poor* that should spend any working day idly, or in loose disorderly Employments (tho they did not beg) and the like Reward to any other complainer: By this means they had store of *Overseers* or Spies, and were afraid one of another.

And tho' this (like setting one Thief to catch another) may be a good way, yet lest the Knaves should agree, it is a sure way for the Overseers, or one of them, or rather some Person to be continually employed for that purpose once in a week or fortnight, till there be a full Reformation, to call all such to an account, whom they shall any way suspect to have neglected their work, whether they have wrought according to the Order they lately received; if not, that they make out by good circumstances how else they have been Employed, and what they have done since last examined: And in case they cannot, or will not give a good account (to wit) that they have done so much work in that time, as Persons of their strength and capacity might conveniently do;
then

then their not giving such account is a just inducement to suspect they have been *idle* or *ill* Employed: And therefore 'twill be both proper and easie to have them before two Justices of the Peace: And in case they do then prove they have constantly followed their Lawful Employments, yet for their refusing to give an account at home, their Journey will be a just Punishment. But if they cannot then prove that they have constantly followed their Lawful Employments, it will be a just cause for the Justices to send them to the *Bridewell*, as the aforesaid * Statute * 43 Eliz. cap. 2. in this case directs.

And now having, as I conceive, briefly mentioned a plain Method, I shall withal observe those Objections that have been by *some*, and may again be made by *others*.

First, That those who are by Lists to work round a Parish, live at so great distance from some places, that they cannot return home at Night, and are, for the most part unfit to be Lodged.

This Exception may be thus salved: They may have a Bed, *viz.* a Sheet or Blanket provided for them by the Overseers, the charge thereof deducted out of their own Wages, which they may carry with them as often as they change Houses (as soon as they have been at such places in order according to their Lists, whence they may return home at Night) which will not only be a Lodging fit for such Persons, who may well be supposed not to be of the better sort of

Workmen, but equal with the *Scotchmen*, the most genteel sort of Runabouts.

Yet this is an Objection that will seldom or never need this or any other like remedy; for such loose Persons once finding that they must constantly follow some Lawful Employment, either *out of*, or *in Bridewell*, will get themselves into constant Work, or take Tasks, yea, and work at half Price, rather than so wander from place to place, and as 'twere, beg Work, which the worst Workmen scorn to do, especially of such who desire their room rather than their company.

The next Objection is the *Obstinacy* of those that should Employ them according to their Lists; some pretending they have no Employments other than for those whom by compact they are to employ, and so will not employ such as shall be sent unto them by the Overseers.

This Objection seldom or never needs an answer; for the resolution that may be expected from those that are so appointed to work, *not* to work according to such appointment as hath been observed, will prevent the grounds of such clamor: Yet if any shall apply to such, who either cannot, or will not Employ them; for instance, should one that hath 20 *l. per Annum*, be appointed to Employ one of the Poor two days, and for his work to give him Diet, and 2 *d.* or 3 *d. per day*. If such Master will pay the Wages, which for two days may be 4 *d.* or 6 *d.* that should excuse him for his turn, and the Workman go
to

to the next on his Lifts, and the Money so to be paid, not to be paid to the Workmen, for if it should, they would get half a dozen Masters in a day to put them off, but paid to the Overseers, and accounted for by them, as for and with the rates to the Poor. And if any refuse to pay such small sum, which will not cost the owner of 20 *l. per Annum* 1 *s.* in a Year, considering that few or none will go round according to such Lifts, I conceive so much may be added to their *rates* to the *Poor* beyond their usual proportion; or charged on them by a rate made for the purpose, to be entitled, *A rate made by the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor, for setting on Work, and better Relief of the Poor, &c.* And to be charged as by other rates, and those to be excused from Payment that employ them according to the Lifts.

A Third Exception is, *The trouble or difficulty in the oversight or managery hereof.*

But in one Year this Method will prevent abundance of trouble; for loose, idle Persons being always at leisure, do often clamor for Relief when they need none: And if their demands be not satisfied, they complain to the Justices, who never do, nor can do less than order the Officers to come before them, to answer, and shew cause, if any, for not providing for them according to their need, or else to relieve them according to their necessity without appearing. And such Officers as live far from the place where the Justices meet, will often give the Complainers

far more than they need, meerly to save themselves such a Journey, especially when they have the wit to complain in a busie time. Whereas few or none will be willing to accept of Relief from the Parish upon such terms, as once in a week or fortnight publickly to give an account of their demeanor unto him to whom they will soon give the Title of *Bridewell-keeper*. And many will maintain a decrepid Husband, Wife, or Child, rather than come under such weekly Examination, whose maintenance otherwise would not only lie on the Parish, but make all the rest of such a Family idle.

For men in Husbandry, it will be a very small trouble to procure them Employments; 'tis only writing and delivering them *Lifts*, where and at what rates to work: And the Wages should be the less, for that the Masters may be the willinger to Employ them, and that they may the rather get work themselves.

And for Employing Women in Spinning, Carding, &c. that trouble will be less to the Overseers than writing and delivering Notes, for Men in Husbandry; for one Person that usually Employs Spinsters, may Employ them all without 1 *d.* damage, there being enough of such in or near most Parishes in *Devon*, and scarce a Parish wherein some Weaver, Comber, or other, doth not Employ a good part of the Spinsters therein. And it can be no damage to the Employer of them; for 'tis certain he will pay them no more Wages than they deserve: And he is sure in
case

case they spoil his Goods, to be satisfied for the same by the Officers, he proving the delivery thereof. And the Officers need not fear being at any great charge in making such satisfaction, for the Poor that receive the Wooll will make satisfaction themselves, rather than be publickly Whipt, as the Law directs, 7 Jac. 7.

And as to the calling them to an account, that trouble scarce requires an hours time in a Fortnight ; for if they work according to the appointment of the Officers, those that Employ them will soon give an account thereof. If elsewhere, they must satisfy the Officers thereof, or such as they shall appoint to Examine them at some Time and Place, once in a Week or Fortnight, to be limited unto them : And in case of neglect or refusal, to be punished as is before mentioned in the Clause *For setting such Poor on Work as receive no Relief*. And there is scarce a great Parish wherein there is not a Person or two, who for 40 or 50 s. *per Annum* will undertake the setting up, and continual managery thereof, which will be more than so many Pounds gain to the Parish : And in *small* Parishes it will be little or no trouble, and in a short time little or none in a *great* one.

And altho' it hath been objected, That such Employer must have at least 100 l. Stock to Employ the Poor of some large Parishes, and that Attempts of this nature have terminated in the loss of the Stock, through bad securing, or ill managery ; yet remitting so much of the severity of the Law, as to allow
all.

all poor Persons to get Employments where they best can for their own advantage, so that the idler and looser sort give a weekly or other constant account, how and where they are daily Employed, he that by appointment of a Town or Parish, shall bestow 40 s. in a Stock for keeping the Poor on Work that shall apply to him by appointment of the Overseers, shall with such a Sum purchase a larger Stock than he shall in that manner dispende with in Seven Years. And tho' it may be true, that 100 l. may be little enough to be bestowed in a Stock, were the Poor constrained to be employed thereon, and not allowed to work elsewhere ; yet a 100 part of such a Stock, with such other Methods as in pursuance of the Statute are hereby proposed, will make them get Employment themselves, which will be as advantageous to the Publick, and more satisfactory to the Poor and all others ; and the charge of raising, hazard of entrusting, and care of managing a Stock, prevented. And if it should be demanded, Why then should there be any such Stock at all ? I Answer, That in some Places where there are many Tradesmen, there is a necessity that there should be a Stock, or a Tradesman who manageth a Stock, in readiness to employ them, to answer the clamor of those who would otherwise pretend, that they were ready to work if they could get it ; but when a Stock is in readiness, or can soon be procured, then that Excuse is prevented. But withal, when they know that their

Wages

Wages will not be great, and their Discipline scandalous ; That if they are not diligent in their Employments, or if the same do not appear at a publick Examination , that then they will be sent to the *Bridewell* ; * And that if they spoil or imbezzle the Goods so delivered , they will be publickly Whipt in their own * *De non apparentibus & non existentibus eadem est ratio.*
 * Town, few or none but will get constant Employments from Masters of their own procuring: for this new Method of Catechizing will soon get the Name of a *New Bridewell*, and to be so Examined, will be lookt on to be such a disgraceful thing, that the beginning with two or three in a Town or Parish, will affright the rest into an orderly manner of living.

And for such Tradesmen as for want of Skill, or too much Obstinacy, are apt to spoil their Goods, and as for such others for whom no Employments can conveniently be procured in their own Trade, such may be employed in Husbandry, and have *Lifts* as before is mentioned, where, and at what Rates to work. This County affords Employments enough for such as have the use of their Limbs, and their Wages may be proportioned to their Deserts, and their Defects for want of use will soon be supplied by the contrary, and their Obstinacy too will soon find an effectual Remedy, exceeding the *Dutchmens Pumping*, if they are put to earn their Breakfast before they break their Fast.

Another

Another Scruple hath been made by Overseers of the Poor, and some others, That whilst the Statute by which they are Constituted, only requires them to set their Poor on Work, whether such as *never* received *Relief* for themselves or Families from the Parish, or are not otherwise apparently *Poor*, may be *compelled* constantly to follow some lawful Trade or Employment. And because the satisfying of such Officers of their *Power* and *Duty* herein, is of vast consequence, the Labor of such People, when they come to be placed in Almshouses being small, comparatively to what it might have been when they followed the Alehouses, &c. I shall transcribe the Resolution of the *Oracle* of the *English* Laws on another Statute, whose words are *these*.

By the Stat. of the 7. of K. *James*, tho' they have Lawful means to live by; yet if they be idle or disorderly Persons, the Justices of the Peace have Power to commit them to the House of Correction: A general and large Power given unto them, without exception of any Person. And saith further, that their *Mittimus* may be more safe upon this Statute, *Quia otiosa inordinata persona*; for that he is an idle and disorderly Person, Or, that he is an idle Person, Or, that he is a disorderly Person; according to the words of this Act, than on the 39 *Eliz.* with this Marginal Note here inserted. [*The words are in the Disjunctive.*]

By this short Discourse I mean not to insist on the largeness of the Power given to Justices of the Peace
by

by this latter Statute, in sending such to the *Bridewell* for living idly as have Estates to maintain themselves, the Statute in that particular is plain, and my Lord *Cook's* Exposition thereon before quoted, authentick; so that nothing in relation thereunto seems wanting, except the oftner putting the same in Execution. But I shall confine my self to such as the Statute of 43 *Eliz. cap. 2.* extends to, which, as Judge *Cook* in the place before quoted says, reacheth not to Persons that have Estates to maintain themselves, as that of the 7. of K. *James* does; Yet I conceive, that from under the denomination of the word *Poor*, we are not to understand every Person to be excluded, that may say he never had Relief from the Parish, and insolently adds, that he scorns the having any; but all such as by the plain Letter of the Law the Overseers are to take, and cause to be duly Employed; *viz.* All such, whether married or unmarried, as have no Estates to maintain themselves, nor ordinary and daily Trade of Life to get their Living by; so that tho' they never had Relief from the Parish, yet neither that, nor their insolent scorning, excludes them from the reach of the Law: For if they have no Estates to maintain themselves, nor ordinary and daily Trade, &c. where by ordinary and daily Trade, cannot but be understood some ordinary and lawful Trade or Employment, wherein they are daily Employed; if they are not, then the Overseers are

to take care that they be duly punished : And if they pretend they want no Work, it may shew that they have a mind to be idle ; but no Pretences nor Suggestions are to be taken notice of to frustrate the good intent of this Law, without proving where their Estates are that are sufficient to maintain them, or what Trade or lawful Employment 'tis wherein they are daily Employed.

And as to that Scruple, whither such are bound to give an account to the Overseers, how they are daily Employed, and how they spend their Time :

I Answer,

First, If I am a Servant, and by my Compact am bound to do such Work as my Master shall Employ me in, the giving an account of what I have done, is as much my Duty as the doing the Work : And such a Servant as shall obstinately refuse to give the Master an account of what in such Concerns he hath been Employed in, is as much a disorderly Servant, as he that refuseth to do his Work. Now if I have no Estate to maintain me, nor ordinary and daily Trade, I am then bound to work according to the appointment of the Overseers : And tho' it be not by my own Agreement, as a Servant is bound towards his Master, yet I am thereunto obliged by an Act of Parliament ; and that is more binding than any Contract between Master and Servant can be ; and consequently my giving an account to the Overseers

verseers how I have been Employed, is as much an essential part of my Duty, as 'tis the Duty of a Servant to give an account to his Master.

Secondly, Laying aside this Answer as insignificant, which I take to be unanswerable ; yet it cannot be denied, but such are bound to work according to the appointment of the Overseers. But say some, What if they do not so, they are lawfully Employed elsewhere ? I Answer, That admitting that as a good Excuse, (tho' the Law seems not to allow it) yet the bare affirming that they are elsewhere Employed, may not be believ'd till it appear to be true, and it cannot appear to be true, till it be proved before the Justices of the Peace before whom the Complaint is made against them : For altho' in Causes wherein a Person is accused for committing a Crime, the Proof of such an Accusation lies on the Accuser ; but when for Duties omitted, the chief Proof lies on the Party accused ; and the Overseers who are the Complainers, or on whose behalf such Accusation or Complaint is made, are only to prove that they provided Work for the Party accused, who for not working accordingly, nor proving a just Cause for omitting thereof, is to be sent to the *Bridewell* : And if objected, that such constant Proof will be both a great trouble and charge to such Persons ; yet so long as they may prevent this trouble, by working as the Overseers direct in pursuance of the Statute, Or

may work where they can best get Employment for their own advantage, so that once in a Week or Fortnight they bring a Certificate from their Masters, mentioning where they are constantly Employed, Or procure their Masters, or some of their Families, to come with them at some Time and Place to be limited, to vouch for their Demeanor, which may be done with no charge or trouble worth the mentioning; they may blame themselves, if for want of such Certificate, or for want of giving such account, they are put to the trouble of proving the same, or sent to the *Bridewell* for want of such Proof.

Another, and no small Damage to the Publick, ariseth from such as are commonly accounted the better sort of Workmen, when through the deadness of Trading and other Vicissitudes, Renters of Farms and others, cannot give so large Wages as such expect, and as they willingly would and do pay when their Commodities sell at a better Rate; and so, rather than comply with such Vicissitudes, which ever have been, and ever will be, in stead of bearing a part in such publick Calamities, will do their utmost to make them worse: For altho' the Wages which they get, and have a constant Employment, may be more (the Prices of things considered) than what they received in those which they call the best Times, and far more than the Statute allows; yet rather than comply with such Changes, by abating ought of their former Stint, they

they will abide at Home idly, and get little or nothing : So that in some Places, were but a Computation made of what such Labourers might have earned in that time which they spent idly, 'twould amount to far more than would have maintained all the impotent Poor of that Place : So that 'tis easie to see how it comes to pass, that such as get the greatest Wages are commonly the poorest Men , and how the Families of such often come to be burthensom ; in the mean time 'tis so much certain loss to the Publick, as in such time they might have gotten. But this fullen Humor would soon be drain'd, if one or two of the principle of them had Lists from the Overseers to work round a Parish, and made to give a due account of their daily Employment ; and in case of refusal or neglect, Prosecuted as is before directed.

Another Exception is the obstinacy and neglect of Officers that should Employ them, who will not take this or any other Method for setting their Poor on work, tho' the Law, and the Magistrates Order thereupon, positively require it.

The contempt, obstinacy, and neglect of Inferior Officers, are in this Age, as 'twere, Treason-proof against all Authority, publick Interest, common Reason and Civility, the *Mare Lethi* of all Laws. Such swallow Oaths without the least straining, and seldom Present the most apparent Offences, without being set on by some Personal Prejudice or Quarrel of their

their own : Hence Faction and Profaneness have their shelter. Yet tho' they look on their Oaths as things of Form, and insignificant, their own Personal Interest is still minded : So as that those who will not Present an Offence for their Oaths sake, nor for securing the Publick Peace, nor for suppressing Profaneness, will do it to save themselves a Shilling. And now having observed where they are least Fortified, next follows how to make an Attempt there.

If the Justices of the Peace, who are emphatically, or more eminently the Overseers of the Poor of the County, (all others being their Substitutes, and acting by their Nomination and Order) shall be fully convinced of the great Advantages of reforming the loose, idle, and leuder sort, and more orderly bringing up the Children of such : If they consider what the charges of maintaining them may otherwise in a short time come to, and what other ill consequences may be expected from their numbers and *Leveling* Principles, of which they gave some hint by their Mutineers in the late *Frost*, and full proof in the since *Rebellion*. As they would be *willing*, so they would find it an *easy* matter to cause a general Reformation of such. And altho' I cannot propose as fit Expedients as themselves may know, yet presume to propose one, which doubtless will soon make the Officers diligent therein, and consequently effect *all* the rest.

Informers

Informers being never wanting against any sort of Offenders whom the Justices of Peace, or others of Worth and Quality desire to punish, whensoever any that is herein countenanced by them, shall see a Person begging or wandring, or otherwise idly behaving himself, let him procure such Person to be warn'd to appear before the two next Justices, to answer for such his loose, idle, or disorderly manner of living; and also in like manner procure the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the Parish where such idle Person dwells, to appear before the same Justices at the same time, to answer for not *providing Work* for, and *setting on Work* such poor Person, as the Law directs. And upon hearing the matter, if it shall appear that such Officers have fully discharged their Duty, in providing Work and fit Employments for such poor Person, then the Person so wandring, is by the positive words of the Law to *be sent to the Bridewell* for his or her not duly following the same. But if such Officers cannot prove that they have provided Work, &c. for such poor Person, then they are by the same Law of 43 *Eliz. cap. 2.* to pay 20 s. apiece for each Month they have so neglected; and the punishment of *one* Officer, will make an *hundred* others diligent to do their Duty.

And that Informers may never be wanting, the ancient Method of *Marshals* (which yet in some measure remains) may be renewed, their numbers increased,

fed, their Salary not Yearly, as now, but proportioned to their diligence and numbers of Vagrants they Apprehend, &c.

Having been already tedious, I shall only add, that this will be so far from over-stocking the County *Bridewell*, that 'twill soon eradicate the very Roots of *Idleness*, in which so many are now brought up and prepared for that *Place*.

And that every Overseer of the Poor of the meanest Capacity, may be fully instructed in the Discharge of his Office in this Particular, which is of such vast consequence to the Publick, Idleness begetting Poverty, that subtilly shams and tricks desperate Resolutions, Breaking of Houses, Robbing on *Necessitas cogit ad turpia.* Highways, with a Cloud of the like ill Consequences, which must of necessity be prevented, whilst all Persons have their constant Employments in their own Towns and Parishes; I have therefore hereunto added plain Precedents, as well for them as for the younger sort of Clerks to Justices of the Peace, for their better assistance herein. Such as shall be Employed in Husbandry, may have Notes delivered unto them to this effect.

WHereas by an Act of Parliament made in the 43. Year of the Reign of our late Sovereign Lady Queen *Elizabeth*, Entituled, *An Act for the Relief of the Poor*, all Overseers of the Poor are obliged
to

to provide Work for all such Poor of their Parishes, whither married or unmarried, as have no Estates to maintain themselves, nor ordinary and daily Trade of Life to get their Living by, upon pain of forfeiting 20 s. for each Month they neglect so to do ; and all such Poor obliged to work according to such Appointment, or in default thereof, to be sent to the House of Correction: In pursuance therefore of the said Act, We whose Names are subscribed, Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of *W.* do appoint you *G. G.* to work for the Persons undernamed of our said Parish, successively as herein named, in such Employments in Husbandry as they shall Employ you in, beginning on *M.* next: And from the midst of *March* to the midst of *September*, you are to begin your Work by Five of the Clock in the Morning, and not to end until between Seven and Eight at Night ; And all the rest of the Year to begin by Twilight in the Morning, and not to end till Twilight in the Evening. And for such your Labor you are to receive 3 *d.* per Day in the Summer, and 2 *d.* per Day in the Winter, (or, &c.) and your Diet : And you are to give each of them timely notice before you apply to them as aforesaid. And on every Pay-day, and at the usual Time and Place for paying the Poor, you are to give us a due Account of your due observance

E

hereof,

hereof, or how you are otherwise constantly Employed; or in default thereof, you must expect to be Prosecuted as the Law directs.

Given under our Hands the 6---Day of *M.*
Anno Dom. 1686.

Days.

A. B.—4

C. D.—3

E. F.—2

G. H.—2

J. K.—1

J. C. } Churchwardens.
L. B. }

E. L. } Overseers of the
F. C. } Poor.
D. F. }

Reserve a Copy of what is so delivered, and write under the Copy to this effect: That on the ---Day of *M.* 1686, such a Note was delivered unto *G. C.* by *L. B.* 10. *M.* 1686. The like Note was delivered unto *L. F.* by *L. B.* 12. *Mar.* 1686. The like Note was delivered by *L. B.* unto *F. C.*

To

To such Persons as shall be Employed in the Employments of Weaving, Combing, Spinning, Carding, or, &c. Lists may be delivered to this effect.

WHereas by an Act of Parliament made in the Three and fortieth Year of the Reign of our late Sovereign Lady Queen *Elizabeth*, Entituled, *An Act for the Relief of the Poor*, the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of all Parishes, are obliged to provide Work for all such Poor of their Parishes, whether married or unmarried, as have no Estates to maintain themselves, nor ordinary and daily Trade of Life to get their Living by, upon pain of forfeiting 20 s. for each Month they neglect so to do; and all such Poor obliged to work according to such Appointment, or in default thereof, to be sent to the House of Correction: In pursuance of the said Statute, We the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of *W.* undernamed, do appoint you *S. D.* that you work for *L. B.* of our said Parish, in the Employment of (Insert the Employment) with whom we have agreed to Employ you, and who is to give you such reasonable Wages as you shall deserve; and you are to attend him for Employment as aforesaid on *M.* next: And on every Pay-day, and at the usual

Time and Place for paying the Poor, you are to give us an Account of the due observance hereof, or how you are otherwise constantly Employed; which if you refuse or neglect, you may expect to be Prosecuted as the said Statute directs.

Given under our Hands this-----Day of M.
1686.

A. B. } Churchwardens.
C. D. }

B. L. } Overseers of the
E. F. } Poor.

Keep a Copy of this sort, and underwrite as is directed in the former Precedent.

If any refuse or neglect to work according to such Appointment, or to give a due Account as is before directed, then complain to the next Justice of the Peace, and desire his Warrant, which may be as follows.

Devon sh. *To the Constables of W. or either of them.*

Complaint being made unto me by (or on the behalf of) the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of your Parish, that the Persons undernamed of your Parish, do refuse to work according to their Appointment, and as the Statute

tute in that Case directs, having no Estates to maintain themselves, nor ordinary and daily Trade of Life to get their Living by: These are therefore in His Majesties Name to require you to Summon and Warn the said Persons personally to appear before me, and other of His Majesties Justices at---on---to answer the Premises, and to shew Cause, if any, why they should not be sent to the House of Correction, as the said Statute directs, and see that you make due Execution and Return hereof. Given under my Hand.

A Warrant of Commitment for such as shall make no just Defence, &c. being charged for refusing to work according to the Appointment of the Overseers.

Devon sh. *To the Constables of W. and unto every and either of them, and also to the Keeper of His Majesties House of Correction within the Parish of S. Thomas the Apostle, near the City of Exon, These.*

WHereas it appeareth unto us, That the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of W. aforesaid, have of late provided Work and fit Employments for A. B. one of the Poor of that Parish, who hath no Estate to maintain himself, nor

nor ordinary and daily Trade ; And that the said *A. B.* refuseth to work according to such Appointment, and as the Statute in that Case directs ; and he being, in pursuance of a Complaint thereupon made unto us, (or one of us) dñly Summoned to appear before us (in case the Party make his Personal appearance, then, in stead of mentioning these words (Being duly Summoned) say (Being duly Convened before us) this present Day, to make his Defence, if any, in the Premisses, shewed no just Cause for such his Refusals : These are therefore in His Majesties Name to require you the Constables afore said, immediately upon the sight herereof, to take the Body of the said *A. B.* and him forthwith to convey, or cause to be conveyed, unto His Majesties House of Correction afore said. And the Keeper of the said House of Correction is hereby in His Majesties Name required to receive into the said House of Correction the Body of the said *A. B.* when to him brought, for the Cause afore said, and him therein safely to detein and keep, until he shall be thence delivered by Warrant from us, or some other Justices of the Peace for this County ; and in the mean time to keep him to hard Work and Labor, and to punish him by due and moderate Whipping : And hereof fail not.

Given under our Hands and Seals the Day
of, &c.

We

WE whose Names are subscribed, Justices of the Peace of the County of *Devon*, having Perused and Examined the Method hereby Proposed, for Employing the Poor, and being well satisfied of the agreeableness thereof with the Laws and Statutes in that Case provided, and of the good Effects it hath produced in such Places wherein the same hath been put in Practice within this County, Do desire that it may be Printed for the Publick Benefit ; and do recommend it to the several Parochial Officers of this County. Given under our Hands at the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace of the said County, held at the Castle of *Exon* the Fifth day of *October*, in the Second Year of His now Majesties Reign, *Annoque Dom. 1686.*

William Drake.

John Worth.

John Gifford.

John Northcot.

John Huchenson.

Samuel Saintbill.

Tho. Drewe.

John Beare.

Hugh Stafford.

W. Fortescue.

John Quicke.

*Cum totidem quot nos habeant animasque manusque:
Dic Cur vitam alio nequeant traducere pacto ?*

F I N I S.